

Mothers Group

A musical comedy

by Hamish Darby

featuring music by Kara Square (MIND MAP THAT)

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Mothers Group

Synopsis: Comic sketch about the trials and tribulations of a group of women, united only by their family status. Features music under a separate creative commons license.

Characters:

Tranda – From a very rich family - suitably horsey and plummy (childbearing age)

Carita - Intelligent, plain, solid and well presented (childbearing age)

Uma - The youngest and good looking (childbearing age)

Cynthia - Caritas mother

Buffin - a teenage male + doubles as supermarket drongo

Mrs Busselton - older lady, supervisor in supermarket

Supermarket owner - older the better, preferably male but female works.

Midwife - Probably female- almost any age.

Cynthia - Caritas Mother about 50

Doreen- Office Worker about 50

Dancers - the opening number is a dance which may be performed preferably by a dance troupe or the actors or without any movement at the directors discretion.

Scene One - Fading things

Interior lounge day

Cynthia: (Making the telephone call) Hello, Hello!

Doreen : Hello.

Cynthia : Yes, is that Roger? Roger Pertwhistle?

Doreen: No?

Cynthia: No I see.

Both (pause)

Cynthia: May I please ask to whom am I speaking?

Doreen: Right, Yes of -course, please do forgive me, my name is Doreen, Doreen Golf. I've just started you see, I was working in accouts and I have just been promoted to Marketting.

Cynthia: How do I spell that ...Doreen?

Doreen: G...O...L...F like the game.

Cynthia: 'G' for Glossy, 'O' for opulent, 'L' for Luxury and 'F' for Fading, thankyou.

Doreen: And how may I help you this evening?

Cynthia: Evening?

Doreen: I'm sorry. It's evening here , where are you calling from again?

Cynthia: Sorry Doreen, never mind about that, you see I think there has been some mistake.

I was referred to you by Roger Pertwhistle just yesterday...

Doreen: (interrupting) Yes, Yes, I'm terribly sorry about Mister Pertwhistle, but he hasn't been well for some time, and with the reshuffle ad everything...

Cynthia: (pause) ..did you say, *reshuffle*?

Doreen: Yes.

Cynthia: I'm sorry, I must have missed something. I was getting on very well with Mr Pertwhistle. With Roger I mean, has something happened to him?

Doreen: (apologetic) Well, he's gone...

Cynthia: ...WHat? ReaLly ? But I was just talking to him yesterday, he was such a lovely man, what a tragedy for your business, he must be a great loss for the whole endeavour?

Doreen: Well, there was a reshuffle...

Cynthia: There's that awful word again, do we really just reshuffle people out of existence these days, what on earth does it mean?

Doreen: Well, I can't imagine that this is what you rang about, but he was re-assigned to work in archives. There is no elevator in the archive outbuilding you see, I have worked there myself. There can be a lot of climbing up and down those stairs, and he *wasn't* getting any younger...

Cynthia: Good lord! You mean to say he was just getting irrelevant and you put him out to pasture?

Doreen: No! He's in hospital.

Cynthia: What?

Doreen: Yes, Hospital, he had a heart attack.

Cynthia: You tried to kill him off?

Doreen: May I ask what this is about, I seem to have revealed more about the office than I should.

Cynthia: (composing herself) ...O.K. Doreen, I see. You just started...from the accounts department, Ah Hah. Well it's about the magazine.

Doreen: (quizical) Magazine? What magazine?

Cynthia: (correcting herself) Catalog! It's a catalog, the fashion edition came out last week.

Doreen: Ahhhhhh! Yes, now I seem to remember someone saying you might call. There is a problem I believe, you were referred to us from complaints. Now I'm with you, there's a note about it around here somewhere...(shuffling paper)...can you refresh me about...

Cynthia: Well, I could go on all day about the catalog. It's not such a matter of what is wrong as to how many things are wrong. I have a list. Where should I start?

Doreen: From the beginning is always best. No, thankyou Nigel.

Cynthia: Angel?

Doreen: Nigel. He always brings coffee around in the evening.

Cynthia: How nice for you.

Doreen: Your compllaint?

Cynthia: Well for starters, there's the infidelity.

Doreen: Fidelity?

Cynthia: Don't pretend you can't hear me, I know what happens in those offices, with your high heels and your painted nails and your...(exasperated) coffee bringers.

Doreen: All right, all right ! Cynthia, I fail to see the relationship between the catalog and peoples domestic affairs, so perhaps you can enlighten me? I am just catching up.

Cynthia: There is a woman in this catalog, wearing a fur. I mean who wears fur nowadays anyway.

Doreen: Actually, It has been a popular item, but not all women wearing fur are unfaithful.

Cynthia: No, No, Doreen I haven't finished yet. The woman wearing the fur. (aside) As far as I can tell she isn't wearing much else either. (To Doreen) The woman on page six is wearing a wedding ring; but when she appears in the family section, posing with a man, she isn't wearing one!

Doreen: Good grief, you are right! That is very observant of you Cynthia, but I hardly think that argument holds much water these days. I mean, what makes you think she was married anyhow?

They're just models after all. Perhaps she was modelling the ring, but not really married in the first place.

Cynthia: Probably cat fur anyway, Look there are a lot of other problems with that edition and probably the new edition too...

Doreen: The new edition, what's the matter with that?

Cynthia: ...um...

Doreen: ...Cynthia?

Cynthia: Yes?

Doreen: Are you alright? What is this really all about? How can I help? I mean, I have just moved here into a new office with a new job and my first day. I want to make a good impression, I would like to help, but I can't see that these things add up to much of a problem really. Tell me, what is wrong with the new edition?

Cynthia: (sheepishly) I haven't ...got it...

Doreen: What? You mean to say that you rang up to complain about a catalog you haven't got?

Cynthia: Doing all that work on a glossy catalog, I mean it can't be good for the planet and all that. But why does it always have to come down to money?

Doreen: You have lost me again, Cynthia ! Why haven't you got the new catalog, have you changed address?

Cynthia: Is it frightfully expensive to print those things? I've been getting them for, Oh! How many years now?

Doreen: I don't know how many years?

Cynthia: Since I was a youngster, that's all. It isn't right. You just expect it. You just take it for granted that you spend a few bucks on a jersey and the next thing they start coming. You never think it's going to stop...

Doreen: Have you bought anything from the catalog?

Cynthia: Oh, yes! Heaps of things...

Doreen: When?

Cynthia: All the time, I just thought I would look through one more catalog and find the latest...

Doreen: Right, so if I start the computer up again...

Cynthia:...Well, O.K, so it has been a while, but things are a bit tight now you know. The world economy is in recession. I haven't got much to spend on luxuries

Doreen: Like catalogs?

(An optional music number may be inserted here "Fading things" by Admiral Bob
<http://ccmixter.org/files/admiralbob77/29264> Backing track can be derived by downloading stems)

CYNTHIA. Carita will be home soon.

DOREEN. Carita?

CYNTHIA. My Daughter, she is at school.

DOREEN. So young as that?

CYNTHIA. Yes. Quite, Well thanks for your time. Goodbye. (Hangs up)

(Lights out Curtain)

Scene Two - Careers

(Carita and Uma stand frozen at a bus stop in school uniform with school bags nearby. Carita has an over-stuffed practical bag of books while Uma's is a nearly empty matching luggage type of portmanteau. In this scene Carita confesses to her friends that she is pregnant. Scene opens with loud music and a dance routine by a visiting dance troupe- ideally the music will be chosen by the dancers themselves, from suitably licensed music from ccmixer, for example "Bye Bye Bye" by Loveshadow (featuring Mind Map That) [1])

Carita. (coming to life as the dancers exit, both patting pockets and rummage through bags looking for

their phone) Now THAT is a cool song. Have we got the same ring tone?

Uma. (consulting phone) No service !

Carita. No battery !

Uma. How freaky is that ! We both download the *same* music to our phones, then we can't work out which one is ringing. We must have matching taste in music.

Carita. Did you download yours? Is that legal?

Uma. I got credit for my birthday.

Carita. You paid for it? My aunt sends them to me. He always says the same thing.

Uma. Says the same thing?

Carita. Yep. She says "..., competition always come in second place". Why steal when you can share?

Uma. (Laughing) I wish I had your aunt. Competition wins bronze? What a plonker ! (pause) I hear that big business enterprises everywhere have really taken to *sharing*.

Carita. Really?

Uma. Yeah, and pretty soon we'll have to prize their fingers open, so other people can have a turn.

Carita: (giggles and looks at her watch) I wonder when the bus will come ?

Uma: It has never been this late before.

Carita: I feel like a cigarette.

Uma: (Mocking) Funny! You don't look like a cigarette. You don't smoke.

Carita: I wonder why people always smoke after romance, I wonder if that's anything like smoking after school.

Uma: Ha ha! a kind of punishment you mean? Perhaps it balances all the goodness of school.

Carita: No, I don't ...smoke. Are you applying to university?

Uma: Nope,

Carita: Are you thinking *vocational training*?

Uma: Mum has got me a job at the supermarket.

Carita: Really, I heard Tranda got a job there too.

Uma: Really? Awesome ! Fantastic! We can be the *check-out champions*.

Carita: Hmmm, the *retarded retailers* more like.

Uma: My Mum works there, we could get you a job.

Carita: No thanks. I'm holding out for something more important.

Uma: Night fill pays well...(changing her tone) Liar! What are you planning? Do tell, University? Job?

Carita: I am just looking at options for the moment.

Enter Tranda also in school uniform

Carita: Hey Tranda, do you remember Uma from english?

Tranda: Ah yes, the pretty girl! Hello Carita. Hello Uma,

Uma: Hello

Tranda: Pleasure to meet you, is the bus running late again?

Carita: We were just talking about Careers, what are you planning on doing after school?

Tranda: Maybe go to the beach.

Carita and Uma (together) Ha Ha

Carita: We mean when school is finished forever, you know, for a career and that.

Tranda: Dad wants me to work in his office, but I couldn't stand working for my old man. I have just been offered a position as it happens.

Uma: A comfortable position, I hope.

Carita: Check out? At the supermarket? Are you going to take it?

Tranda: Mum and Dad are going overseas next year, I want some spending money.

Carita: (in disbelief) Crikey! You're both just going for short term cash?

Tranda. (delivering sarcastic judgement to Carita in a southern drawl) Yep ! I'd reckon y'all better spit out your gum, Lurlene, coz you're goin' to be a *professional*.

Uma. Is that from a chick flick?

Carita. No, but it should be.

Uma: Seriously though, a friend of mine gets a discount on all her weekly necessities.

Tranda: A discount? Really? For check-out work? what necessities?

Uma: You know, like grocery stuff. I dunno. shampoo, conditioner, cleanser, toner.

Tranda: Moisturizer.

Carita: (thoughtful) Condoms

Tranda and Uma: (shreiking in unison) Ewwwww... (tranda and Uma look at silent Carita)

Uma: What are you saying?

Carita: (sheepishly) ...actually...

Tranda: Leave her alone, Uma! (realizing carita has spoken) Carita? What are you saying?

Carita: Actually...(long pause)...I'm late

Tranda: Why the pregnant pause...(realizing)...Oh spit !

Uma: (condescending tone) Well, *Of course* you're late, the bus hasn't come yet.

(During scene change all three young women together sing "A day late and a dollar short" by Steven Bryant with music from <http://ccmixter.org/files/stevieb357/31539>)

Lights out and Curtain

Scene Three - Fessing up

(interior day Carita family household kitchen, Mother is at the stove holding a saucepan)

Carita (enter and cross as though slinking past to her bedroom on the far side)

CYNTHIA: Tough day?

Carita: Pardon?

Mother: Hey listen Carita, just hold this saucepan for a moment while I tip this into it (pouring something from another saucepan) ...thanks! Now, my cherry-pie if you want to avoid a little heart-to-heart you may go.

Carita (Makes as though to leave)

Mother: Not so fast

Carita: Mum!

Mother: You might want to act like a teenage princess of the universe, but I'm making your favourite dish tonight. *I* would like to talk to *you*. Indulging the whim of an old lady, especially your mum is the least you can do...

Carita: especially where gnocchi is involved...(considering)...do we have those capers?

Mother: Australian semi-dried capers ?

Carita: OK, I give in. I will make the tea. What are we going to talk about? About Dad reversing over my in-line skates? About whether or not the little old lady next door actually chops up children who stray onto her property, or does she put them in a freezer and just nibble on them...

Mother: (interrupting) Carita!

Carita: It's true! All the kids at school are scared of her! She's a witch. I can hear her talking to the bodies.

Mother: Are you having sex?

Carita: (shocked) I am not sure what I was expecting, but not this. I just finished a school day, Mum. Can I go take a shower now?

Mother:(waits for her to finish) I'm serious. I was reading...

Carita: I can't believe this, first my mother is taking advice from a glossy magazine and now she is dispensing pearls of glossy wisdom to me as well.

Mother: It was your copy actually. I did the personality quiz and you didn't score very well. We need to talk.

Carita: It's going to be one of those talks, I had better get comfortable. Here is your tea (sits. taking out teabags or pouring from pot).

Mother: I noticed your jeans.

Carita: The jeans I cut off? They had a hole in them.

Mother: You made a hole in them. You made a hole under the right cheek so your knickers were on display. You cut them off so short that the pockets hang out lower than the hem, or where the hem should be if you had taken them up properly. The magazine says it is a sign of sexual assertiveness.

Carita: All the girls are doing it.

Mother: Doing what? (labouring stare)

Carita: Cutting their jeans.

Mother: OK. I can accept that, but I found your t-shirt from sports with a rumple at the front, so I know

you have been tying a knot in the front. Showing off your belly.

Carita: (patting her stomach) I have something to tell you.

Mother: It's not just the clothing, I mean you spend more time on the phone than a third world country. Are you trying to tell me that no boys are involved at all in these conversations? What about Buffin from up the road?

Carita: What about him?

Mother: Well what is there *not* to like, he has got a six pack you could break bricks on. I saw him the other day in wet denim jeans, like a little boy, when he bends over...

Carita: Mum! Is this what you wanted to talk about? I've got something important to tell you.

Mother: Anyway, I expect it can't be too long before the boys start putting the hard word on you, so I just decided to take the bull by the horns (long pause) and buy you some equipment.

Carita: Equipment?

Mother: Gear! Chattels! Here you go. (producing condoms) You need not be embarrassed. It isn't *about* sex, it's about health. If they aren't on, it isn't on. The magazine said to leave them out like after-dinner-mints and let you young folk to explore them at your own pace. Do you want to try one on a vegetable?

Carita: I'm pregnant.

Mother: No chance, one of these jelly-snakes will take care of all that...

Carita: I wanted to tell you ...

Mother: pregnant?

Carita: ...to tell you sooner

Mother: Sooner? (sits, skulls the tea) How pregnant are we talking here?

Carita: Fourteen weeks

Mother: F O U R T E E N ? How did you manage to keep it a secret that long?

Carita and Mother (together): Barf bags.

Mother: Who is the father? (Looks at Carita and realizes the indelicacy of the question)

Carita: Oh Mum! (dissolves into tears, embrace)

(Time Passes eg Lights down then up again)

CYNTHIA. Carita there is something I need to talk to you about.

CARITA. Fire away mum.

CYNTHIA. Funnily enough, It's about firing.

CARITA. Well, with the sort of work you can get around here today, this will not affect you so much, but I still need to address it.

CARITA. You have my attention. What's this about firing?

CYNTHIA. Well, women didn't stand a chance in my day, that's all.

CARITA. Who didn't stand a chance? What were they firing? Pottery?

CYNTHIA. (with a start) such innocence ! No, I am trying to say I got fired.

CARITA. Really?

CYNTHIA. Not now ! I mean in 1960 I was 'let go' to concentrate on housework.

CARITA. You were messy? Is that any reason to get sent home? Eh? What happened, Mum?

CYNTHIA. No I had a baby. Women weren't sposed to have babies then unless they were mothers. If you wanted to pursue a career then, you needed to stay single, or keep it quite at least. most women did alright until they wanted a baby.

CARITA. But you worked in a legal firm, surely things were changing by then? Couldn't you just keep the pram in a back room?

CYNTHIA. If only it were that simple. Have you thought about feeding your baby?

CARITA. I wondered when you were going to ask. I thought I would just give the baby chicken and chips every day.

CYNTHIA. this is serious. They told me I would have to bottle feed. They couldn't stand having a woman poke their eyes out with her nipples in the office.

CARITA. Ha ha! It's a womans choice. That's crazy, That is mean. I mean you had the breast cancer anyway...

CYNTHIA. No Carita, That is what I am trying to tell you. I didn't have breast cancer, I was just weak. I let them run me off, like a coward with my tail between my legs. They said I could keep working and bottle feed, full stop and they meant business, too.

CARITA. Those prigs, those blooming law partners have a lot to answer for, can you sue?

CYNTHIA. Not the men.

CARITA. You're spitting me ! You ARE joking? The women !

CYNTHIA. The other legal secretaries, the women in the office. I couldn't help it. I wept for weeks. They fired me. Well they made my life hell and then let me go, same thing. I just couldn't bear it. All thses years I have been letting you think it was a breast cancer.

CARITA. It was a cancer alright ! Cancer of the office.

CYNTHIA. I let you think that to stop you asking questions. I just couldn't relax. the stress was too much. I stopped working and I still couldn't feed you. The experts were hovering around with bottles of sample formula, just itching to get me started. I tried feeding you between bottles, but it was hopeless. It just wasn't done. It was too hard to discuss. Nobody talked about it.

CARITA. (tenderly) It's OK Mum.

CYNTHIA. I used to sing a song about it. I knew one day things would get better.

CARITA (pause) A song? What song?

CYNTHIA. There is a song. I would like to share it with you. It might give you the courage to talk about it, to think about it, to share it with the world and Uma and Tranda and all your other girlfriends.

(Lights dim and spot on CYNTHIA centre upstage - sings "breastfeeding superpower" by MIND MAP THAT <http://ccmixter.org/files/mindmapthat/35178> solo with backing music while Carita freezes, then lights out and curtain.)

Scene four - the job interview

SUPERMART OWNER. O.K you think you can handle this on your own?

MRS BUSSELTON. Where are you going? I thought you were going to interview them?

OWNER. (thinks about it) ...Nah! Do you think you can remeber all that stuff about equal opportunity employment?

MRS BUSSELTON. Yes boss.

OWNER. So you know the sort of thing I am looking for.

MRS BUSSELTON. I think so (meekly) - a bright personality...

OWNER. Well here is a uniform (produces a check-out uniform on a hanger with a tiny waist and massive bust)

MRS BUSSELTON. But....

OWNER. You can't mention it, but you can leave it hanging here during the interview.

MRS BUSSELTON. The pretty ones?....(looks at OWNER - no reaction) sorry...You're looking for girls with a bright future?

OWNER. Exactly.

MRS BUSSELTON. How can you tell, the light is not very bright in here.

OWNER. Oh, that's deliberate. See that tape on the carpet there? Ask them to stand there with their toes against the line. The light bulb is directly overhead. Don't hire anyone unless the shadow of their future falls over the toe of their shoes. Do I make myself quite clear? I mean...you can't look at their boobs directly, you know, it just isn't done. clear and fair employment process and so on, but you can take a good look at the shadow over their shoes. Have you got that, or will I have to deny it later?

MRS BUSSELTON. Right boss. anything else? shall I ask them a mathematics question?

OWNER. mathematics - like accounting with a raincoat on. what on earth for?

MRS BUSSELTON. Well....Let's say the customer buys a tin of asparagus for three dollars, I could ask them what is the change from ten bucks.

OWNER. What for?

MRS BUSSELTON. To see if they can add up the small change in their head.

OWNER. What I'm asking is, what would the customer want *asparagus* for? Disgusting greenery! Chips are the only true vegetable product.

MRS BUSSELTON. We could ask them about a tin of something else.

OWNER. Chips don't come in a tin.

MRS BUSSELTON. What about frozen chips. We could ask them a question about small change from a packet of frozen chips!

OWNER. The till is always correct. If more of us remembered that, the balance might be even at the end of the day for a change, instead of fifty bucks short. No. Don't encourage them to think. (pause) Smile. You could ask them to pass the smile test.

MRS BUSSELTON. What test?

OWNER. (brusquely expalanatory, motioning sign language with both hands) If their smile causes a change in the differential angle of the lip more acute than the hypotenuse of the difference between their elbow and the collar bone or the radius of their head as a function of pye to the third power, *they're in.* (slows) I don't like smiles myself, people barring their teeth at me all day, but the customers go for that sort of thing. Well, I'll be off then, I'll be doing nine holes if you need me.

MRS BUSSELTON. O.K. I hope your team wins then, (aside) I'm really bad at snooker, (out door) best of luck!

(Exit OWNER, MANAGER takes a large file and reads aloud title of each paper in the stack)

MRS BUSSELTON. Equal opportunity guidelines, commercial sector standards, chamber of commerce code of ethics, reputation risk reports, community engagement project, company mission statement, employment and the law. closes folder and places in a drawer, takes out glossy magazine. Sits and reads.

(CARITA, TRANDA and UMA enter and gather upstage from where MANAGER sits reading)

TRANDA. There is no way I am buying that uniform. (indicates uniform still hanging where OWNER left it)

UMA. I am not sure I can fit into it. Won't they give us one? (rises and goes to the door)

CARITA. It was made for a stick insect. I am sure you will manage. I changed my mind, I'm going to the gym (makes to leave and UMA and TRANDA grab her and guide her back to upstage centre)

MRS BUSSELTON. Hello there! Which one of you girls wants the first interview?

UMA, CARITA and TRANDA (all together) Her.

CARITA. Me, I suppose.

(all three women remain upstage centre facing forward and the MANAGER interviews their back. What follows is an abstract impression of a job interview rather than a linear script. It should be delivered at a rapid tempo with lines interrupting each other without any breaks)

MRS BUSSELTON. Who sent you?

TRANDA. Aunty Myrna.

MRS BUSSELTON. You're hired.

CARITA. Do I have to answer that?

MRS BUSSELTON. Where do you see yourself in five years time?

TRANDA. You're not asking the questions.

UMA. Can I ask a question.

MRS BUSSELTON.. Certainly, sweetie.

CARITA. I can ask anything I like.

MRS BUSSELTON. just stand with your toes on the line of tape.

TRANDA. Do you have any programs to develop staff ?

UMA. Can I have the same shifts as my friends?

MRS BUSSELTON. What would you do if a customer wanted to complain?

TRANDA. I will be seventeen next birthday.

UMA. What are the benefits of working here?

TRANDA. I have previous work experience, washing mummies volvo. I give it a good scrub (motions)

MANAGER. Annual *leave*, Long service *leave*, sick *leave*, Maternity *leave*, why not just just *leave* right now ... *leave* the door ajar, O.K., Can we just *leave* out all this...*lever*-age?

UMA. My uncle worked here as the token disabled.

TRANDA. How much will I get paid?

MRS BUSSELTON. There is a token system.

UMA. I like scanning. I scanned my library book. I set an alarm off.

CARITA. I'm pregnant.

MRS BUSSELTON. I can hear an alarm going off?

UMA. I have lived here all my life and always come shopping here, except on wednesdays.

TRANDA. Pot roast on wednesday.

UMA. Netball wednesday.

CARITA. Wednesdays I gotta visit my cousin, Morris the Mutilator, at the prison.

MRS BUSSELTON. We are looking for somebody to work wednesdays. What brings you to town?

TRANDA. What *are* we doing here?

UMA. I haven't had any sick leave at all.

CARITA. I wasn't going to bring this up.

TRANDA. I used to ring up prices on the cash register there.

MRS BUSSELTON. When can you start?

TRANDA. When would you like us?

MRS BUSSELTON. You three are going to make me look good, I can feel it in my waters.

UMA.(muttering) Never mind, grannie.

MRS BUSSELTON. Pardon?

UMA. (louder) Ever tried cranberry?

MRS BUSSELTON. Isn't that for dementia?

UMA. I can't remember.

TRANDA. Do we need a name tag.

CARITA. All three of us have the same name: *Trainee*.

(Lights out and curtain)

Scene five - the party

(Exterior. Night. A Barbecue. Tranda and Uma are wearing fur and holding drinks)

TRANDA. (in disbelief) You *SLEPT* with him? Let me get this straight, (slowly for emphasis) you slept in the *same* bed as the *father* of your best *friends* baby?

UMA. Well, kind of. He kind of slept with me.

TRANDA. Did you *kind of* have sex with him?

UMA. Do I have to answer that?

TRANDA. (aside to audience) Is this girl just about as dumb as a bag full of hammers, or (to Uma) isn't that the first question Carita is going to ask?

UMA. I don't even like him.

TRANDA. It is true. In grade seven, remember, when the teacher said you were so slow that he had to line you up with a telephone pole to see if you were moving? That was true, wasn't it? Where have you been living while your body is down here on earth? (hysterical) What were you thinking?

UMA. Tranda I have to tell Carita, there is no way to be civil about this. It happened, I am being honest about it.

TRANDA. Uma, I am not even sure if I can stand here and listen to this. I mean we are supposed to be friends. What happened? Only one of us is pregnant and suddenly we have adult responsibilities and we manage them with an appalling adult rate of failure. We are too young to be this mucked up! I'm going to Europe next month and I can't leave things in such a mess. Tell me honestly how we could be in such a mess. Tell me what happened.

UMA. I went round to Carita's place and he was there.

TRANDA. good start.

UMA. Carita was out shopping for baby stuff, you know her parents bought her a shopping trolley liner.

TRANDA. No I didn't, what is a shopping trolley liner?

UMA. Well, you know how when you go to the supermarket, they have shopping trolleys there?

TRANDA. Ah ha!

UMA. Well this goes on the inside of the seat part, where the baby sits while you are shopping. She got the zebra pattern but she hates animal prints.

TRANDA. Are you trying to distract me?

UMA. Not working is it? Just stalling. How ca I talk about it. I hate to think of it even.

TRANDA. You are killing me, Uma, but mostly with suspense, if you don't get on with it, how can I tell if ... I can't even think. Just tell me.

UMA. He was dancing.

TRANDA. good.

UMA. We danced for a bit.

TRANDA. during the daytime?

UMA. It was evening.

TRANDA. better

UMA. He knows tap, ballroom, new vogue, rock, jive. He is a very good dancer.

TRANDA. He is very good looking, too, but that doesn't excuse you goig for it. What ahppened next?

UMA. We went to the night club.

TRANDA. Bad move.

UMA. I just split up with Joel. Joel was at the night club. I should have known. Joel was there with a new girlfriend. I hate that guy.

TRANDA. What has that got to do with you and Caritas life partner?

UMA. You don't understand. I wasn't jealous. I just wanted to enjoy myself. I mean enjoy dancing with a nice guy. Carita came home late and decided not to come out. We were together for hours. And the Joel started kissing his new bit of fluff.

TRANDA. You have been out with us before and never slagged yourself with a flirt, what happened?

UMA. I had too much to drink and woke up in his apartment.

TRANDA. I don't know whether to punch you or kiss you. I think we are staring to get somewhere. Carita might be able to see this angle too. I mean I always thought there was something fishy about that guy and now I know what it is. You can't just throw your whole life away on a moments pleasure. You can't just go around getting everybody drunk and sleeping with them, there is temperance and moderation and sensibility and respect and restraint and safe sex.

UMA. Couldn't be.

TRANDA. Couldn't be temperate? Sensible and Responsible? Why not?

UMA. Safe Sex. Couldn't have been safe sex.

TRANDA. Of course it bloody could, Latex would have no market except for the rampant youth of our fine city. Whole plantations in Malaysia are needed to slake the thirst for latex of our fellow students. Safe sex is a staple of the modern metrosexual. What on earth are you talking about?

UMA. I'm pregnant.

(Lights Curtain *INTERMISSION* with incidental music "Vox Versus Ukelele" by Unreal_dm and MindMapThat http://ccmixter.org/files/unreal_dm/33707)

scene six -jealousy and making up

(CARITA and TRANDA sit at the back door of the supermarket among packing cases. Carita is clearly pregnant and starting to show by now)

TRANDA. Can I ask you something?

CARITA. Anything, sugar.

TRANDA. You remember the Moroccan boy from supply?

CARITA. Yes, yes...(long pause)...no. TRANDA. Never mind. What are you now? twenty four weeks? Maternity leave in two months, right?

CARITA. Don't change the subject, you said the 'B' word.

TRANDA. Yeah, 'B' for break, as in - let's take five and eat lunch.

CARITA. No. 'B' for Boy. Moroccan?

TRANDA. The french accent?

CARITA. Him ! Yes I remember now, the guy from the wholesaler, always filling up the spice rack with his barcode reader at the ready. He is a bit shy.

TRANDA. Not when you get to know him.

CARITA. (ralization dawning)...Just how long has this been going on for?

TRANDA. Our five week anniversary is on Tuesdsday.

CARITA. F I V E W E E K S ! I thought I was good at keeping secrets. Hey, hang on just a second, does he have a visa?

TRANDA. He is a citizen acually.

CARITA. Good, I can't have people boning my friends to get into their passport. *Je suis un terroriste, non?*

TRANDA. Carita!

CARITA. Forget I said that. It slipped out.

TRANDA. That *is* the problem, actually.

CARITA. I thought you liked things a bit exotic. A bit spicy.

TRANDA. Well I do, but the parents found out last week.

CARITA. Oh ! I see. His parets don't approve?

TRANDA. Carita, thanks a million for the vote of confidence. No, actually! *His* parents invited me to dinner, The problem is *my* parents. My parents already have a short list of suitable partners and he is not on it.

CARITA. I'm sure he will be OK for a bit on the side. Uma is not the only person who jumps fences you know.

TRANDA. Still bitter?

CARITA. She can be my guest. She is welcome to the bastard.

TRANDA. I've got something to tell you.

CARITA. I thought you were already telling me, about the Morrocan boy, how about some juicy details.

TRANDA. (slowly for emphasis) Your *ex* left Uma.

CARITA. What ?

TRANDA. Your ex. The guy who betrayed you. The father of your unborn child.

CARITA. Right

TRANDA. ...is also the father of Uma's Child, but when he found out, he ran off. CARITA. REALLY? You'r kidding? (recovering) Our children will be halflings.

TRANDA. Halflings? You mean elves? Hobbitses?

CARITA. I mean half brother or half sister to each other. They will have the same father. The same useless wombat genetics.

TRANDA. Wombat?

CARITA. Wombat. According to the dictionary, the wombat is an outwardly shy creature that eats roots shoots and leaves. The father. Progenitor of our children. I've gotta talk to her, is she here today.

TRANDA. Just a minute, I'll check (poking her head into the wings and hollering in a most unladylike fashion) U-M-A !! You're taking this very calmly.

CARITA. Placenta brain. Makes me teary but quite unclear about most things.

TRANDA. Discomforts of pregnancy. I thought piles and lack of sleep sounded worse.

CARITA. Which reminds us we were talking about you. I'm sorry. Piles and sleep? Have you have been doing some reading about pregnancy? Tell us about this boy?

(Enter Uma - taken aback by CARITAS presence)

UMA. What do you want?

TRANDA. You said it would be OK if I talked to Caria about yur fella leaving.

CARITA. Uma...

UMA. Before you start again, Carita, I just want you to know it wasn't all my fault. It was the pregnancy mostly. He just doesn't want to be a father.

CARITA. Uma, please...please let me say something. If there is any way I could have stopped this form happening to you too. Uma. I know how badly I have hurt you over the last couple of months. I know how uncomfortable I have made things for everybody. I can't stand it being so sordid and plain and ordinary. I hate the fact that we are just mammals after all. Our dreams and aspirations are just laid waste before the power of a flashy smile with long eyelashes. Are we any different from the women of yore, who spent their lives in anxiety for their sense of connection and placement in the world. If I could turn back time...

TRANDA. The stud got you both pregnant and racked off.

CARITA. OK OK That is exactly what I was trying to say in my own way. Even before he left, I had already started to forgive you, I WNATED to forgive you right at the start. We were such good friends before. If there is anyone who should be apologizing, it should be me. I should have been a better friend. I should have seen it coming. I should have tried to do something. I should have been alright with it.

UMA. I'm sorry to interrupt again, but I have been wanting to say the same things for such a long time, I wanted to make up. I know our friendship has changed forever, but I hope we can be wiser and better friends because all this has happened. Carita, I am trying to say I loved you all along.

CARITA. And I loved you too (they embrace)

TRANDA. I'm going to cry.

CARITA. Don't let Mrs Bussellton see you cry, she will take credit. Gosh sorry Tranda, we have forgotten about all your problems with all this happening.

UMA. What problems.

CARITA. Tranda has taken up with a new boy, but her parents do not approve.

UMA. Who is he?

CARITA. The Morrocan boy with the french accent, from the wholesaler.

UMA He's lovely

TRANDA. He's Muslim.

UMA and CARITA (together) Oh, great !

CARITA. You didn't mention that before.

UMA. It could be worse I suppose.

TRANDA. I'm pregnant

UMA It is worse.

CARITA. Do you know what this means? We are going to be moms together.

TRANDA. If my parents don't shoot him first.

UMA. Have you told them?

TRANDA. I just found out.

scene seven -the maternity ward

(Interior night maternity ward)

Phone rings

MIDWIFE. (answering) Hello MMaternity ward how can I help? You are looking for Mrs. Wright? First Name Shelby? Let me see, was she booked in here or the private hospital? You want to know if she is in hospital? I think I might be able to help there. You are her father? You want to know about the baby? Aha! Boy or girl, weight length and that sort of thing? We don't normally disclose client details over the phone, what about if I put you through to her room and you can chat to her about that yourself? No? Why not? You haven't spoken to her for ten years, you're just getting curious about the baby? I am not sure if I can help you, Mister...? Mr. Parker?

Now hang on just a minute, let me tell you something. I had a phone call last week from a woman wanting to know if her sister was in labour. She wanted her sister to know that her husband could not talk on the phone because he had his face buried in her lap. There is no accounting for the type of insult and injury that people will take advantage of while my clients are in hospital and I see no reason why I should make an exception in your case, good day. (Slams down receiver)

(enter Tranda panting, swaying and holding swollen belly)

MIDWIFE. Hey, Honey.

TRANDA. Honey? Damn! I Knew I forgot something.

MIDWIFE. Sorry?

TRANDA. My friend Uma gave me a jar of leatherwood to bring in labour.

MIDWIFE. Leatherwood?

TRANDA Honey from Tasmania, you know...(pause) Big foot.

MIDWIFE. Yeti honey? Bunyip honey?

TRANDA. Wilderness indeed. No. To explain myself, I mean leatherwood is a special honey that comes from Tasmania. Full stop. New Sentence. Last time I was here you commented my big feet were a good omen for birth.

MIDWIFE. Right. what makes you think you're in labour?

TRANDA. I've been up all night with the contractions. Speak of the devil, here comes another one (panting and grimacing)

MIDWIFE. Take big deep breaths, sweetie, you could be in for a long night.

TRANDA. Contractions and my waters broke.

MIDWIFE. Have you got knickers on?

TRANDA. (to herself) quick panties check (to MIDWIFE) Is that a question that can be asked between adults? Yes I have a new pad on because the last pair were soaked.

MIDWIFE. The reason I am asking is that sometimes it can be hard to tell if the waters broke.

TRANDA. What else would fill my pants in one hit? There was a lot of moisture.

MIDWIFE. How much? A cupful?

TRANDA. A cup? More than that. I'm not sure. Sorry but getting it in a cup must have slipped my mind. I was more worried about getting it all over the bed. Zoltan was doing sommersaults.

MIDWIFE. Zoltan?

TRANDA. Zoltan the destroyer. The baby. Actually I am trying not to call it that anymore, but the habit is dying hard.

MIDWIFE. sometimes we have a little leak and we think it is the waters breaking.

TRANDA. A leak? Oh! I see, *a leak as in a bladder leak. No, I think I would have known.*

MIDWIFE. What about we check your cervix (doning a glove)

TRANDA. Great idea, how do we do that? Ultrasound?

MIDWIFE. Digital examination.

TRANDA. Digital ultrasound?

MIDWIFE. By inserting a gloved finger and checking manually.

TRANDA. How about I just ride a bicycle without the seat? Is this going to hurt?

MIDWIFE. You're going to have a baby.

TRANDA. OK, So it is going to hurt.

MIDWIFE. Getting anxious will release the adrenaline and slow down the labour.

TRANDA. Shorter the better, How do I avoid getting anxious? have you got dugs?

MIDWIFE. Heavy artillery. Free Cocktails for every passenger.

TRANDA. We're going to get along fine. How long will this take?

MIDWIFE. Let's check your cervix and find out.

TRANDA. You and your cervix again. I hope you get well paid for cervixes rendered.

MIDWIFE. By the hour.

TRANDA. No ! I wish it was by the birth, then we could get on with it.

MIDWIFE. When you arrived, you were talking about Uma.

TRANDA. Uma is my friend in crime, she is coming to support me in labour. She is pregnant too, booked in for another couple of weeks at this same hospital, do you know her?

MIDWIFE. Actually I just saw her.

TRANDA. But I hav'nt called her in for labour support, hwta is she doing here, is she OK?

MIDWIFE. I think we better ring around and find you someones else for labour support.

TRANDA. Oh, No ! Please tell me what happened, is the baby OK? What happened.

MIDWIFE. They are both fine, just a little bit pre-term.

TRANDA. Pre-term? But she's due in two weeks...Are you telling me she is here in labour?

MIDWIFE. Excactly that.

TRANDA. Can I see her.

(Enter Uma also heavily pregnant)

UMA. I couldn't help overhearing. I was hoping you would ask for me. I am not sure I could keep away.

TRANDA. But Carita is away, she is supposed to be your support. She will spew if you have the baby without her.

UMA. Looks like we will be supporting each other. What do you say sister, can we both have a baby in the same room?

MIDWIFE. We will need another cot, two beds. Well not really, but we will see what we can work out.

TRANDA. Never mind, I will be right next door. I know it is an unusual request.

MIDWIFE. You would be surprised. I am a midwife; Unusual requests are a specuality. You can have your babies together. It will be my first Tandem. It is going to be a long night. Let's get started.

(Lights out, curtain)

scene eight-the swimming lesson

The Swimming Lesson - interior, day, municipal pool

Very empty set – perhaps a garden background from another play.

Lights up with Tranda and Carita on stage. Both are wearing a swimming costume. Flippers and goggles are ideal and add to the humour. Depending on the modesty of the cast – board shorts and halter-neck or even neck-to-knee frilly britches, as long as it looks entirely aquatic. Both carry a plastic baby doll, also wearing something that suggests a swimming lesson, a pair of plastic pilcher pants at the least. There is no water in sight – the idea is to suggest they are standing in waist deep water by their actions. Both are in the pool, waiting for the lesson to start. Rippling blue lighting to suggest aquatic centre interior.

Carita: (looking closely at Tranda's 'baby') It was a difficult birth, wasn't it.

Tranda: How do you mean?

Carita: The kid looks a bit ...squashed.

Tranda: Speak for yourself!...Eight hours, from nought to nappies. This little one was quicker than

yours!

Carita: Too quick perhaps. I mean, fast births sometimes don't give them time to swivel as they come though.

Tranda: (alarmed) Don't talk like that! Swivel? You're giving me a camel burn just thinking about it.

(pause) Hey listen, who are we going to get, do you reckon?

Carita: Get who? Uma said she would be late.

Tranda: (jealous) Give you a ring, did she? (quickly changing subject) no, I meant the teacher. Who do you think we will get this time? My neighbour said the teachers here are pretty useless. I mean, I learned how to swim here and I can barely stay afloat.

enter Uma - also wearing togs and carrying a 'baby'

Uma: Hello you two.

Carita and Tranda: (together) Hi there!

Uma: You will never believe what just happened.

Tranda: When you open a sentence like that, I have a feeling the outcome is not good.

Carita: Sounds like a long story. Hopefully our teacher will be here soon, so you had better tell us, What happened?

Uma: Well, that's two things I need to tell you then?

Carita and Tranda together); Uh huh?

Uma: Well where do I start. firstly, I guess I had better tell you that my baby sitter fell through at the last minute.

Tranda: Your niece?

Uma: Well not actually fell through, so much as failed to keep an appointment I had yet to make.

Carita: Uma, you are not making any sense, you are SUPPOSED to be here with your baby, why on earth would you need a baby sitter?

Uma: (evasive) Ah ! Well ! That brings me to the point. I am sure you will both like this part, but somehow I am not sure. The next thing you should know is that I am going to be your swim instructor today.

Carita: Can I have my money back?

Tranda: (to Carita - disapproving) Whoah there girl ! (long pause) We think it's just fabulous, don't we?

Carita: (uncertainly) OK (recovering) I think I'm happy about it...I am happy about it. OK, sorry, I was just a bit shocked. I'm over it now. I'm good. I'm cool...

Tranda: OK, what do we do? You're the instructor, but why didn't you just tekk us? We could have had private lessons whenever we felt like if we had known you would be the trainer. You must have realized you would be teaching us two?

Uma: Yes. I had it on the calender but the months are all different shapes on my calender, and I just got confused. I won't be doing it all the time. My baby is the oldest of the three, I don't know, I just realized it would be us three yesterday and then it was too late to change anything.

Carita: All right ! All right ! We can cope with this just fine, In a way I am glad it's you, So what do we do?

Uma: First of all, we sing the welcome song, you know it, just join in with baby like this.

Brings baby forward from her hip and sways the baby back and forwards in the 'water' as she sings.

Uma, Carita and Tranda (together sing to the tune "I'm a little teapot") I'll tell you what my name is/ I wonder if you know/ My name is baby Uma, hello hello hello/ I'll tell you what my name is, I wonder if you know/ my name is baby Carita/ hello hello hello/ I'll tell you what my name is, I wonder if you know/ my name is baby Tranda/ hello hello hello.

Uma: (To Tranda) Now Tranda, how does your baby feel about floating?

Enter boy: Carita has lost interest in the lesson and drifts away momentarily

Tranda: Give her a chance, Uma, she's only six months old !

Uma: Does she do it in the bath?

Tranda: Carita !

Carita: (dreamily) hmmm...?

Tranda: Carita, what are you looking at?(realization)...Oh! (Joins Carita unashamedly oggling boy)

Carita: I think I'm floating...

Tranda: (to boy) HEY THERE ! Yes, you in the speedo!

Carita: Shut up Tranda! He might notice us.

Tranda: (To Carita) I'm trying (To boy) Sorry to interrupt you getting undressed - No! please do! Do keep getting undressed. I was just wondering if you might have the time?

Carita: (flustered) Yes, time, that's it, We come here all the time.

Uma: (To audience): Can you believe this? (To Tranda and Uma) Can we have a class now?

Tranda: (turning back to the group) Of course! floating! I'm not sure if my baby can hold her breath yet. My father tried giving her a cigarette and I got thee just in time. She can sure cough alright.

Uma: Oh my giddy grandmother ! A cigarette? Are you for real?

Tranda: Camel ! ...Ruddy MEN, eh !

Carita: (pre-occupied hand gesturing) Hmm, Men, yes, man, He has got a bit of a hump...

Uma: If he had long hair and one tooth, you would *still* be interested?

Tranda: Poor Carita is feeling the nights alone

Carita: Alone? I'd have to take this limpet on a date (indicating baby)

Uma: (whispering) He had long hair when I met him.

Carita: (Interested) You know him?

Tranda: He'd look even better with long hair.

Uma: Yes he had long hair. Cut it off to please a woman. Thank goodness he had his erratic dentiion repaired.

Tranda: Who would cut his hair?

Uma: Shaved it actually, down to the roots

Carita: Down to the roots? who rooted him?

Tranda: (experimenting with baby) Is this how to float ?

Uma: (shrieks) Carita! (pause) I didn't like him sucking on it.

Tranda: (distracted) Filthy habit, sucking on a ponytail.

Tranda drops her baby and it sinks like a stone, clattering to the floor, Uma grabs it

Off-stage: Sound of baby howling

Uma: Gosh, sorry about that Tranda,I shouold have been paying more attention. (to baby) Poor little fellow. I didn't mean to get so distracted.

Tranda: (furiously patting and rocking rocking to calm the baby) now, now!

Carita: Never mind, Uma, I am sure the kid has had much worse and will survive much worse. There there, poor little ragamuffin, never mind.

Uma: Is the baby all right.

Carita: We have all had a shock.

Off stage: sound of baby crying fades

Tranda; Fine, the baby is fine. Hey listen, I was just thinking. Our patio has just been replaced, what do you say we all get together after this swimming lesson business is all over ?

Carita: Only if you let us christen that sucker with coffee and melting moments.

Uma: Sold. It's a date. Mothers group. phew.

Tranda: (wrinkling her nose) Pooh, more like, by the smell of it !

Scene nine - supermarket super power

Supermarket interior: day. Tranda and Uma are on stage with a supermarket trolley and a pram respectively. many supermarkets are very obliging with trolleys where the store name features on the trolley prominently. Alternatively use a basket)

Uma: I can't believe the price of things!

Tranda: Tell me about it, honey! (Tossing a magazine into trolley) My grocery bill has doubled with a kid.

Uma: It seems like a summer just yesterday I walked through these aisles, fresh from the beach in my bathers and bought one icecream and a mango. When I got hungry later in the same day, I just did it again. (sighs) Now I have to dress up like a snow tourist to hide the spare tyre, bring the baby and enough gear to fill the trunk, can't afford the mango and I have to buy economical tubs of icecream according to a menu planner. Where the hell did spontaneity go?

Tranda: (Laughing) You crack me up ! I can just see you in a bikini buying one mango, I bet the store owner loved the bikini part.

Uma: (sighs) I always draw the wrong crowd.

Tranda: Maybe you should try clothes.

Uma: (jokingly) Bitch ! Maybe you should try friendship once in a while, instead of being missus cold perfect heart.

Tranda: Perfect? Are you kidding, I could tell you some stories about my mishaps, like when my baby fell in the hot-tub. No wonder they're not walking yet.

Uma: I gotta sit down. My baby is stirring. Maybe if I feed 'em here they won't wake up and then I can re-settle before we go home. She will be a maggot if she wakes up properly here with all the people around.

Tranda: O....K.... What? Really? You are going to feed her right here? In the middle of a supermarket?

Uma: It won't take long.

Tranda: I can't, I need to get home. If I sit down here, I won't be able to let down and the baby will make a fuss.

Uma: You do it all the time at Mozart-For-Tots.

Tranda: That's different, It's a church group where all the mum's feed together.

Uma: what am I? chopped liver? I will be right here with you. Come on, take a load off your skinny pins. (proceeding to get comfortable).

Tranda: (reluctant) I can just try I suppose. I am too young to breast feed in public. (sitting anyway)

Uma: Too young?

Tranda: I know, I feel silly saying it, but It just isn't done, none of my friends are breastfeeding.

Uma: Look at it this way, we live for eighty odd years and only feed on mothers milk for one if we are lucky, everybody does it, you just don't see them because it is such a small space of your life.

Tranda: You! You're good, I would buy another pair of tits off you, but I already got mine. I swear you are so passionate about wet-nursing, you could sell a push-up bra to a bloke with ambition.

Uma: (to the baby) It's warm but the cat can't get it, ain't that right darling. (enter drongo)

Supermarket drongo: (eyes popping out) Hey, you can't just flash yourself here..I mean , do you need to breast in the mother's room? um...the rest room? Could you nipple into the rest room?

Tranda: (to Uma) I'm not feeding my baby in the dunny-hole. Let's go.

Uma: (to drongo) Hey, has your mummy let you work here? If you have a mum, you should know better. There is a law about this, you can't just shoo us away, grommet. get lost and stop gauping at my rack. (exit drongo)

(Together sing "*Super Power: Breastfeeding*" by *MIND MAP THAT*
<http://ccmixter.org/files/mindmapthat/35178>)

Scene ten - a brew of gossip

morning tea - interior, day, kitchen

(around a table at CARITA's house. Lights up with Uma and Carita sitting at the kitchen table in an aspect of couple confiding. There are two prams on stage with a pretend *baby* doll in each.

Uma. I just can' believe it.

Carita. You better beleive it.

Uma: (almost sobbing) When he said he was giving himself to me, I didn't think he meant 'on loan'.

Carita: What did you expect. He has a reputation bigger than ...bigger than (looks at audience)... well down past his knees. You can hardly go downtown without hearing of another conquest.

Uma: He said he really dug me.

Carita: He dug you? What kind of line is that? What was he *digging* for, I wonder?

Uma. He just stopped digging me.

Carita. It sounds more like he was a liar with a shovel to cover his tracks.

Uma: Some Men,.. your husband is alright...

Carita. Uma, I spent a lifetime looking for him, and I had to woo him for a long time.

Uma. (sarcastically) Woo? Woo hoo for you too...sounds very romantic

Carita. It was lovely for him.

Uma. You had to woo him? You can't just - pick a partner and make him like you?... How? What did you do?

Carita. Flowers. Dates. Poetry. flirting. I courted him. I even sang to him. You know my photographs? We exchanged photos for about a year before he went out with me.

Uma (incredulous) A year !

Carita. Is that so surprising? Haven't you ever wanted someone you couldn't have?

Uma. Yeah. Often. Usually the ones who just left me.

Carita. Not him. I mean before you got to know them?

Uma. Well actually I have been seeing someone, but I can't talk about it.

Carita. A highschool crush on someone who didn't know you existed?

Uma. I am the high school sweetheart other people had crushes on.

Carita. Have you ever been in love?

(Enter TRANDA)

TRANDA. Now there is a leading question. Am I interrupting, should I come back later?

UMA. You made it , good. I have something to tell you both.

CARITA. I love news.

TRANDA. So do I and I have something to add.

UMA. you first. My news can wait.

TRANDA. My parents are coming to visit.

CARITA. Oh, that's fantastic news ! Are you sending him downtown again?

TRANDA. No that's half the news, they want to meet him. I have asked them for dinner next week and they offered to bring desserts. I think they are really trying.

UMA. Is that only half the news, what is the other half?

TRANDA. Well you know he worked in supply, stocking the spice racks?

CARITA. A responsible role, ware-housing.

UMA. Were-house? You mean when there is a full moon he turns into a house instead of a wolf?

TRANDA. Better than that.

CARITA. Lmae joke anyway, what do you mean, Tranda? Has he got a promotion? Is he going to bar code dairy or something?

TRANDA. Better than that.

UMA. The suspense is killing me, How good can it get.

TRANDA. I showed my parents up without meaning to. This boy belongs to a family that owns half of Morocco, he doesn't buy the spice, his family farms produce the stuff. is father sells helicopters for goodness sakes. He was too cautious to say anything, but he is loaded.

CARITA. Fantastic Tranda, what wonderful news, We are both very happy for you.

UMA. Can we book a holiday in Morocco and stay with you?

TRANDA. Of course, plenty of room for all of us.

CARITA. I think we all need a holiday. Right. Now, Uma what's your news, have you found a new love in your life?

UMA. Funny you should mention that. Actually I have.

CARITA and TRANDA (together) Hooray! Who?

TRANDA. Tell us everything.

CARITA. When can we meet him?

UMA. When can you meet him?

TRANDA. What's the matter, Uma? Is there a problem? Is this one going to hang around? What's going on? Are you ashamed of us?

UMA. No Ashamed No Nothing like that, It's just that...when can you meet...?

CARITA. Shhh Tranda, let her speak, Tell us what is going on, Uma.

UMA (eventually) There is somebody. I met somebody. Lovely. And We are in love actually.

CARITA. Who? What's his name?

UMA. Ah ! well, that is the hard part.

TRANDA. We are listening, Uma, how bad can it be, after all we have been through? My parents haven't spoken to me for a year, Carita had a baby without a husband, how bad can it be?

UMA. I am really worried about how you will react, but I need to tell you. We have been through a lot together. The person I have been sharing my life with is a woman. Her name is Katie. I didn't bring her tonight because I wanted to tell you first.

TRANDA. In case you are wondering, I have decided not to convert to islam and apparently his family is all OK with that. (embracing UMA) In fact his sister has a live-in girlfriend, too. It is a very modern family. I am very excited for you, Uma. It is about time you settled down with someone.

CARITA. Well it looks like we are going to be the cosiest little mothers group around. I feel that each of us has found a way to be a mother for today. We are each of us mothers and each of us making our own way through that puzzle, and solving it together. Not perfect mothers, but normal ordinary mothers getting on with what matters most. Learning. Sharing. Growing and life doesn't get any better than that.

TRANDA. Exactly. It is as though we were waiting to be mothers for half our life without any idea how or what it would really be like, and here we are. Real women and real mothers in a mothers group at last.

(Lights out curtain *CURTAIN CALLS* while all sing "Like Music" By Snowflake (and Mid Map That) <http://ccmixter.org/files/snowflake/31354>)